

Oklahoma Child Care Licensing Requirements

The state of Oklahoma has strong regulations that require child care facilities to be licensed and inspected. A child care license means that the program meets the state's basic health and safety requirements. In general, licensing is a safety net. It is not a guarantee of child care quality. Licenses are issued by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services.

Ratings

Oklahoma is one of a handful of states with a tiered quality system that rates child care programs. The star ratings are based on compliance with licensing, increased education of caregivers, parent involvement, the learning environment and participation in national accreditation systems. Levels range from one star up to three stars.

Adult to Child Ratio & Group Size

Oklahoma licensing regulations specify the ratio of adult caregivers to children. The number of children per adult is important because it has a direct effect on how much individual attention a child receives. These regulations are intended to protect children by making sure they get adequate supervision. Generally, children do better in small groups, so no matter how many adults are on hand, the total number of children who are grouped together for care is also important.

Child Care Centers	Staff-Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Infants (up to 12 months)	1:4	8
Toddlers (12 -23 months)	1:6	12
Two-year-olds	1:8	16
Three-year-olds	1:12	24
Four & five-year-olds	1:15	30
Six-year-olds & over	1:20	40

Family Child Care Homes	Children under 2 years	Children 2 years & over	Capacity limit: Total # of children
Adult caregiver/s			
1	0	7	7
1	1	6	7
1	2	5	7
1	3	3	6
1	4	1	5
1	5	0	5
2	3	4	7
2	4	3	7
2	5	2	7
2	6	1	7
2	7	0	7

Large Family Child Care Homes	Capacity limit: Total # of children	Ages of Children	Staff-Child Ratio
Adult caregiver/s			
1	5	Any age	1:5
1	6	No more than 3 under age 2	1:6
1	7	No more than 2 under age 2	1:7
1	7	All age 2 and older	1:7
1	8	All age 3 and older	1:8
1	10	All age 4 and older	1:10
1	12	All age 5 and older	1:12
2	8	All under age 2	1:4
2	12	No more than 6 under age 2	1:6
3	12	No more than 8 under age 2	1:4

Unlicensed Care

Some types of child care are exempt from the Oklahoma licensing law. Care provided by a relative or in the child's own home does not require a license. Programs that operate less than 15 hours per week are not required to be licensed. Caution is important if you choose unlicensed care because there is no scrutiny by others and no government regulations.

Reviewing a Licensing File

Child Care licensing records are open for public inspection. After you have narrowed down your child care choices, call the DHS Licensing in your county for an appointment to view the files in person. A summary can be mailed or faxed to you. The file will include inspection reports and a history of complaints. It will not include confidential information.

TYPES OF CARE

Child Care Centers

Child Care Centers are facilities that offer care to groups of children in non-residential settings including buildings designed for child care, churches, houses and community centers. They operate more than 30 hours per week and typically care for more than 12 children. These are licensed by the Oklahoma State Department of Human Services.

Family Child Care Homes

Family Child Care Homes offer care for up to seven children within the provider's home. Homes sometimes offer more flexible schedules than centers. These homes must be licensed by the Oklahoma State Department of Human Services.

Large Family Child Care Homes

Large Family Child Care Homes offer care for up to 12 children in the provider's own home. Large homes typically have two adult caregivers present in order to meet requirements for adult to child ratios. Large homes must be licensed.

Drop-In Centers

Centers providing drop-in services care for children on an occasional basis where no child attends more than six hours per day for a maximum of 24 hours a week. Drop-in centers must be licensed if parents are absent from the premises.

Part-Day Programs

Part day programs care for children for more than 15 and up to 30 hours per week. These are generally preschool or mother's day out programs. Part-day programs that operate for more than 15 hours per week must be licensed. Part-day programs that operate for less than 15 hours per week are exempt from licensing.

School-Age Programs

School-age programs provide care and supervision for eight or more children over the age of five. These are generally before-school and after-school programs, extended-day programs, day camps, summer camps and summer park programs. These programs must be licensed.

In-Home Care

In-home care means hiring someone to come into your home and care for your child. This type of care is not licensed or regulated. The family bears the responsibility to supervise the caregiver, meet wage and hour requirements and pay payroll taxes.

Relative Care

Care by someone related to the child may be in the child's or the relative's home. Relative care is not regulated.